

Pisa. 30th April 1823.

My dear Richards,

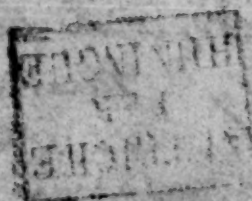
Your letter came with three others. I choose to answer those three first, - you deserve no better. Then I made you wait two or three days more, till I had finished and despatched an article on "Letter-writing", where I took my revenge by throwing something back into your teeth, - I hope you will be truly sensible of the justice of it, - if you find me out. So, with a good conscience, I have made you wait the enormous space of eleven days. I am now, thank God! sitting in the garden, delightfully shaded. The weather is good Mankes jacket-weather, and there is a little breeze, just enough to refresh me without blowing my papers off the table. Again I say, thank God! and my religious gratitude is surely as sincere as any Ultra-Catholic's, as he bows down his head before the Madonna. Talking of religion, two nights since I heard a great noise in a little Church, so in I went. There was a Coffin, appropriately furnished inside and out, the pall decorated with real skulls and cross-bones, and surrounded by half a dozen prodigious wax-candles, bigger than links. I found myself with one Priest, and one Acolyte, and a company of the "Misericordia". They were chanting the seven penitential psalms, and now and then treating us with singing-lectures of certain devout passages in scripture, greatly to the comfort and edification of the dead body. They behaved towards me with great politeness; one advanced to take my hat, which he put by with a due consideration for the nap; and another gave me a cumbersome book of the service; so I thought I could do no less than stay and see it out. All at once we lost our rolling attenders, (for the benches were commodious enough,) and up we rose on our feet. Then what was my surprise to see a fellow bow to me, and present me with a wax-taper! As I happened to be at the corner of the front row, I was served first, which staggered me a trifle, till I found every one else was also served with a similar wax-taper. At the ringing of a tinkling bell, all the tapers were lighted, mine among the rest. Only imagine Signor Carlo, with one of his gravest faces, standing bolt upright with a lighted wax-taper in his hand! It struck me we all looked very brilliant, till unluckily it popped into my head we bore some resemblance to the congregation in Hogarth's "Wedley"; and I was forced to call up my whole store of gravity, in order to refrain from a laugh, - happily I succeeded. Then a horrible suspicion dashed across my mind that I was let in for a Procession through the streets! This worked upon me till I began to sweat, perplexing myself as to which course was best, - to expose myself, or throw down the taper and run away! With great emotion I saw the Priest arrive towards the conclusion of his blessings and fumigations. Now, thought I, we are going, to pair off, two and two! Give me joy, you rogue! there was no such thing; we all of us took our departure "ad libitum"; and I got home relieved of a hundred weight of trepidations. This may be very uninteresting to you, but I can't help that. An advantage in living at a distance is that one's friends' illness, unless it appears of a frightful nature, does not prey upon my mind. I hear that Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so is ill. That is a bad affair indeed; but my comfort is that by the time the letter is in my hands, he or she must of course be perfectly recovered. This is just the state of my thoughts respecting your wife. By the by, I omitted to mention the aforesaid advantage in my essay on "Letter-writing". Give my love to your wife; and

I have no objection to your giving her a kiss for my sake. Harriet, and Lou, and Sophy, and Sidney, are all nodding at me, in my imagination, and wondering I don't kiss them; well, I do, - there, one, two, three, four, - now wipe your mouth, and be happy. Respecting that business between you and Maurice, - I am content it should rest between you and him, - he has a word from me on the subject in my last dated some ten or twelve days since, - I can't exert myself to go into the house to look for the man of the Date. Bless me! it is growing very luxuriously warm, and the breeze has increased, - it got the better of this sheet of paper just now, - but Carlino saved me the trouble of picking it up. Apropos, as to Carlino. I leave him behind when I go to Florence, - but that perhaps you have heard from Dilke. He (not Dilke) talks Italian very prettily, and with a careful articulation, running the vowels at the ends of words into the vowels at the beginnings of words, as if he had been taught at half a guinea a lesson. What a curious thing it is to watch how a child gets into all the moods, and tenses, and genders of a language! The monkey came to me not half an hour since with a bit of cake, and thus he went on: - (you have Italian enough to understand it,) - "Papa, questo è buono! Vuole Papa lo mangiare? No? Dunque, il Bimbo lo mangia. Ecco! tutto è mangiato!" The "lo" ought to come after that same infinitive mood, but that is no matter. Give my remembrances to Mrs Gove, - and ditto to Mr Vincent, - but mine, I do not put them together, - Diana forbid it! It did not a little displease me to read in your letter the account of my conduct being canvassed in such a way, - especially by Rice. He has certainly, in his half jest and half earnest fashion, given many of my friends a very wrong idea of me. Whether he has done me an injury or not is another question; but it is no mistake on his part, as he knows me better; and I am inclined to think every thing that is untrue respecting the character of another, will, sooner or later, do him an injury. I never have been captious on such a point, and am not now, - glad enough that neither friends nor enemies can say worse of me; still I regret he should give a licence to his tongue, not in my favour, and while I am absent. The giving being to Carlino is a great fault, may a heinous crime, in the eyes of many, - I am perfectly aware of that; but that fault, or that crime, is nothing compared to those words which Rice spoke to me soon after his birth, - "As for getting the woman with child, there was no harm in it; but there is harm in taking the child into your own house. I tell you what, Brown, - I can't bear that folks should pretend to more feeling than their neighbours." You may tell him that, bad as I am, I blushed for him, - or rather coloured with resentment at his inhumanity, and his insinuations at my pretensions. I cannot leave this subject without repeating my dissatisfaction at that old sin among literary men, of sitting in company for the sole purpose of saying hard things against each other. There is no great credit in it, - the art is soon learnt by a bad hearted man; and men of kinder feelings, like yourself, should rather rest content with the knowledge that they either can or cannot retort. You will perceive some of this preaching is flying obliquely at you. Indeed, though I sincerely thank you for not sitting dumb when any thing was breathed in my disfavour, I cannot read your triumphant reports without a feeling of regret, though, in all probability, had I heard them, no one would have enjoyed them more. Reading however brings them to the test. "Come," you

will say, "if CB can't say a smart thing, he can, at any rate, write a severe one." So, Genoa is within my ear-shot; why, it is a hundred miles off; what an ear I must have! Take this for Gospel; - I know no particulars of the liberals, except what I have picked up from my friends in England. How should I? L. Hunt, when he writes, is too weary of the articles, to say a word about them; and besides, it is not his humour. But it is ^{not} only of the liberals that I wish to know. Dilke and Mansel, ever and anon, give me a snatch of literary news, always with the idea it cannot possibly be news to me! You, I observe, have a taste for dwelling on it, and therefore I think it worth while to give this hint. So, you tell me, I am christened "Carlone"! I confess it is not so agreeable, nor so pretty a name, as "Carluccio", which was fixed on between me and L. Hunt as my "alias". You see how ignorant ~~how~~ I was, till you informed me of it, even of my own name. "Carlone" is worse, not only in English, but in Italian. It is better to be called "Charley" than "big Charles". I have written to Genoa that it would not surprise ^{me} if I should be nicknamed "Carluccio", which has no politer meaning than "big ugly Charles"; - good! perhaps L. Hunt, in one of his moods, may bestow it on me, as I have inadvertently given him the mischief of it. I shall yet remain three or four days in Pisa, as that abominable Scovon writes me word he cannot meet me at Florence till 1st June. You need not imagine I shall laugh at your writing Oratorio-criticisms. It is better to write than be idle that way, and better still to write for money, - to which I see no just cause or impediment why you should not. While the Carnival lasted, we had a very good company for the Opera; and I think I never saw a more lovely looking creature than our Prima Donna in her three different dresses as "La Cenerentola"; - but, woe is me! she was quite another sort of creature off the stage! You must know I have fallen in love with Opera, - which is a lucky affair for a man in Italy. Then came a company of players, - a bad set, - they made my stomach ache. Now we have another Opera company, but very unlike our Carnival one. I went once, and was so disgusted with the pot-bellied first tenor, and his attempts at singing, that I made a kind of vow never to see him again. The Pisans were as angry as myself, and so the Manager has sent for another in his place, - and we are to have two prima Donnas, - and they are getting up a new Opera for the occasion, - and it is promised every day, - and, hang them! they every day disappoint us. I see by the papers that "La Cenerentola" has been a favourite lately at Paris, - has it found its way to London? By the by, talking of Paris, I see, at two theatres, they have dramatic pieces under the title of "Griby". These are of course taken from Rodien's Novel, who took it from me, though he impudently calls the story his own invention. To give rise to pieces

on the stage would, in the days of my minor vanity, have half stunned my brain at my clumsiness; now, alas! I can do nothing but laugh at it; a child enjoys his soap, but an alderman likes to swallow in a sea of twaddle; - there's a safe reflection for you! I've a great mind to conclude my letter with it, - it is so very good, - especially as I'm too hot and lazy for filling up my usual back-spaces. Courage! I must not set a bad example! What a walk I'll have at sunset! The leaves are all young and beautifully green, - and I know who will be in a certain spot, - and it will be so comfortable, - so delightful! "I tell you what, Master Carlin, if you climb on the table, I'll daub your face with the ink!"

Englilterra. PIS.
 Col Thomas Richards Esq.
 Store-keeper's Office,
 Ordnance Department,
 Tower,
 London.



This was said in my last Italian, - though, be it known, not being able to find a word for "daub", I was forced to say "paint". Yet as the boy has a cure for his beauty, the threat had its due effect. "No, no, Papa, non lo voglio, - mi farebbe brutto! Subito vado via!" There, - is it not provoking? - after failing to fill up these back-spaces, I see, by your letter, you don't merit any thing of the sort. Zie upon you! Now I'm resolved not quite to fill them up, - I'll say no more than that I am, Yours sincerely,
 Chas. Brown

